

THE Shepherd

For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost. Luke 19:10

Spiritual Growth Continues in God's Pod

by Chelsea Charming

The following article is an update on a prison dorm we wrote about in 2012.

Inmates facing the death penalty usually have nothing left to lose. But they often have lots to gain. That was the case for one inmate in God's Pod, the nickname for a faith-based dorm at Lea County Correctional Facility in Hobbs, New Mexico. Chaplain Joseph Brazil just wrote a letter of recommendation for him after he spent a year in the pod.

"We've seen a marked improvement in his life," Brazil said. "I believe that this program has really helped him to see things through spiritual eyes. He was at the bottom of the barrel, but he came into the program and saw that his future is in God's hands. And that has really given him a purpose no matter what happens. He's been very diligent in the studies and really taken it to heart."

One of the studies the inmates in God's Pod participate in is provided by Christian Library International. The Leadership Bible Study is designed to help inmates grow closer to God as they learn to disciple others around them. Currently, there are 60 inmates enrolled in the program in God's Pod. Brazil estimated that since they started the curriculum in 2011, about 75 percent of participants have received a certificate of completion.

"I personally want to thank you for the Leadership course, which I just completed," wrote inmate George. "It seriously helped my growth in Christ and development as a leader."



Inmates of "God's Pod" at Lea County Correctional Facility in Hobbs, New Mexico

Along with the Leadership Bible Study, CLI also provides the prison with Bibles and books. All prisoners who don't have access to a study Bible receive one upon completion of the study. During the last few years, the men in the pod have started writing book reports on what they're reading, and, recently, they've started using the Bibles to give summaries of Bible passages.

"Please let everyone involved know how much the study Bibles were appreciated," George continued. "It absolutely amazes me that 25 criminals (children of God) could be so joyous over Bibles. Thank you so much for caring and for loving us. People are still switching and swapping Bibles to get their favorite!"

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God's Pod

Brazil said that the men in the pod typically do about five to six different studies a week. He likes the Leadership Bible Study because it not only teaches about salvation but also shows the inmates how to grow their relationships with Christ.

"I've seen a tremendous growth," Brazil said. "The ones that really take it serious, it does take root in their lives. They're surrounded by people who sharpen them. They're studying the Scripture and are surrounded by people who are doing the same."

You can disciple inmates in Hobbs, NM, and hundreds of other towns across America by volunteering to review inmate Bible studies. E-mail cliministers@gmail.com to get started.

Planned Giving Offers Hope to Future Generations

by Dennis and MaryCraven Potat

We have supported CLI for 10 years and continue to give through a planned gift to enhance the ministry. Many old and new friends of our family have gotten involved through prayer and book donations.

Through MaryCraven's membership at Hayes Barton UMC and Edenton Street UMC, church members have been involved in other ways. United Methodist Women at Hayes Barton UMC supports CLI through funds and grants from their annual fall bazaar to help women prisoners. Edenton Street UMC sponsors

the annual CLI Prayer at the Prison Gate breakfast and sends volunteers to pray and sing at local prisons in December.

We sponsor tables at the annual CLI fundraising dinner by inviting others to join in promoting the mission of CLI. We have enjoyed bidding on and purchasing silent auction items, including vacations, at the annual dinner. But the

real inspiration comes from the speakers every year who tell the story of their life changes resulting from reading and studying the CLI Bibles and materials received while in prison. It was shocking to hear one speaker say, "I had to go to prison to hear about Jesus and read the Bible."

Words of Light

Who will not fear you, Lord, and bring glory to your name? For you alone are holy. All nations will come and worship before you, for your righteous acts have been revealed. Revelation 15:4

We recently developed a new Bible study for inmates!

Students began enrolling in this correspondence course late last year. To date, 381 prisoners have completed the introductory study and have received handsome certificates. Currently, 939 inmates are enrolled in the study.

The "Who Is God?" study is designed to help prisoners know God through His attributes. As the author of the study, I felt led to choose five of God's characteristics that He reveals in Scripture. For example, there is one lesson each on God's goodness, mercy, love, sovereignty and holiness.

Some scholars list as many as 28 attributes of God gleaned from the Bible. Wouldn't it be a blessing to study all 28? Yes, it would! However, I wanted to start our inmates with a simpler study and one that could be easily completed. We have two other studies that are more in-depth and take longer to complete. In addition, I felt these five attributes would have special meaning for prisoners.

The fifth or last lesson is "God Is Holy." I wanted to end the study on God's holiness because it's one characteristic that we tend to gloss over. We'd much rather talk about God's love, for example. But holiness is just as important as all His other traits. God is always love and He is always holy. He is set apart, pure and sacred.

Therefore, whether we are in prison or not, we are to fear God and bring Him glory because **He is holy. He alone deserves our total allegiance and worship. In the end, all nations will come and worship before God and acknowledge His righteous acts.**

Believers in prison are called to follow Jesus and be holy. God calls us to do the same. Let's obey God when He says, *Be holy, because I am holy* (1 Peter 1:16).

If you'd like to learn more about the holiness of God, feel free to review Lesson 5 of the "Who Is God?" study. All of our Bible study lessons are on our website (cli.world) and you are welcome to read or use them in Bible study groups.

Thank you for partnering with us and sharing your time, talent, and treasures. You are truly a blessing! May God bless you with His presence and favor!

Call to Action: Please consider becoming a CLI Bible Minister by reviewing inmate Bible study lessons. For more information, call us at 919 790-6987 or email cliministers@gmail.com



Kathleen Skaar, Founder

CLI is making a difference in the lives of those who need Jesus Christ. We give to God through CLI for the work of God's kingdom and consider it a blessing to open the door for prisoners through CLI to learn of Jesus Christ.

Please consider including CLI in your will so that future generations of prisoners can find hope and salvation.

To learn more about making planned gifts, call CLI at 919 790-6987.



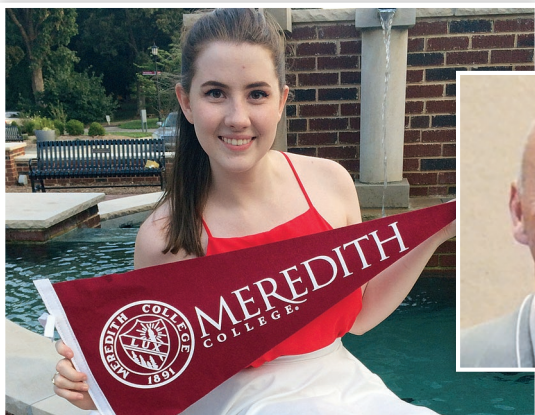
Dennis and MaryCraven Poteat

CLI Adds More Workers to Harvest Field

"Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, 'The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.'"
Matthew 9:35-38

Christian Library International is growing yet again! The Lord has provided us with two new helpers to aid us in sowing the fields he has laid out before us. **John Haeffele** and **Teresa Berton** have joined our staff. John, a recent Board Member and former inmate who was discipled by CLI, will be serving as Midwest Church Partnership and Development Coordinator.

Teresa Berton



John Haeffele

"John has been a valuable member of our board of directors with his insight and wisdom regarding the imprisoned," said Kathleen Skaar, CLI's founder and executive director. "We now welcome him as a staff member to help us reach those in need of Jesus Christ."

Since his release in 2013, Haeffele has had speaking opportunities in Atlanta, Raleigh, Charlotte, Chicago and throughout central Illinois. In addition to speaking in churches, John has written a book about his transformation, *Therefore I Have Hope*.

Teresa joined the staff in July as Marketing Specialist, a new role for the ministry.

Teresa is a recent graduate of Meredith College with a bachelor's degree in communications and has been developing her skills in marketing over the past few years. She will be assisting CLI through her social media and writing efforts.

Call us at 919 790-6987 if you are interested in joining CLI in the mission field.

Inmate Letters: **God is our refuge and strength...**

"I received your CLI Bible today, the day after my birthday. I have been trying to get a Bible for over a month. When it arrived today, it brought tears to my eyes. The Lord blesses me every day!" **Keith, Richmond, VA**

"I want you to know that this book, *Jail House Religion: From Park Avenue to Park Bench to Prison* by Stephen Canup, has really opened my eyes up and made me realize I can't blame anyone but myself. And I really thank God for a new life in Him. I really want to thank you for this book!" **Terry, Huntsville, TX**

The CLI Bible Study:

A very present help in times of trouble

"Thank you for commenting on my lesson and taking the time to assist me! I truly appreciate the reality that there are loving Christian brothers and sisters out there willing to do God's work. Thank you again sincerely for this Bible study lesson. I received a huge amount of wisdom and knowledge from its content."

Robert, Boscobel, WI

"I would like to make sure you know how happy and blessed I am to have come across your Bible course. I do a few other courses, and yours by far is the best I've seen out there. Your course has been a breath of fresh air!"

Chad, Ina, IL





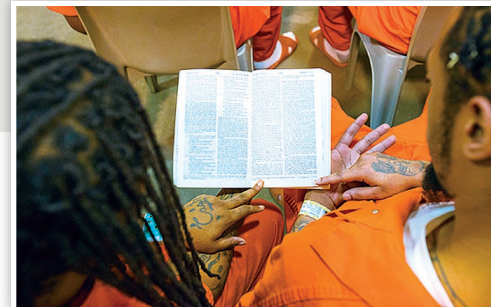
How God Can Use One Book Donate Your Gently Used Bibles and Christian Books

When you donate a book or Bible to CLI, God can use it to change more than just one life. One book can be passed around and read by hundreds of inmates. Each inmate whose life is transformed by that book or Bible might teach other inmates what they learned from it until the whole prison is influenced for Christ by your donation.

Help create a chain reaction for the gospel in our nation's prisons by mailing or delivering your gently used Bibles and Christian books to:

Christian Library International
4724 Hargrove Road, Suite 100
Raleigh, NC 27616

For Georgia deliveries, call 706-362-3282.



CLI Blessed By Bible Bonanza

The Lord has begun a good work! This year we have received nearly 50,000 Bibles from **Prison Fellowship** and **Tyndale House Publishers**. As many of our volunteers can attest, we are tight on space. Through the generosity of **Gregory Poole Equipment Company**, we have found storage for our Bibles. We have seen God's continued provision through **Carolina Restoration Services**, who will be delivering four pallets of Bibles to us as needed. We are so grateful for our friends in Christ and for our generous donors. We have already raised \$16,000 toward our goal of \$56,300 needed to send all these Bibles to inmates behind the walls. The cost of shipping Bibles is \$21 per box. To help us reach our goal, please make a donation using the form below.



In recognition of our compliance with Standards of Responsible Stewardship, CLI has been accredited by the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability.

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